

THE DIVIDED HOUSE,

OR

THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT.

THE DOCTRINE OF

WASHINGTON,
JEFFERSON,
MADISON,
MARTIN,
PINKNEY,
REID,
CLAY,
FAULKNER,
McDOWELL,
WEBSTER,

BIRNEY,
DOUGLAS,
SHIELDS,
LOUISVILLE COURIER,
PARKER,
WADE,
FITZHUGH,
RICHMOND ENQUIRER,
BAKER,

VALPARAISO OBSERVER,
LINCOLN,
SEWARD,
HICKMAN,
EVERETT,
CLARK,
C. M. CLAY,
PHILLIPS,
SCHURZ.

THE DIVIDED HOUSE.

The vexed question of American slavery in its effect upon national politics has developed three classes of opinion:—

1. That slavery is wrong.
2. That it is a practice without moral significance,—a mere question of political economy—"of dollars and cents."
3. That it is right—a blessing to the master and the slave.

Around these three ideas are aggregated the Republican, the Douglas and the Breckinridge parties. The Republican pronounces slavery a moral, social, and political curse. The Southern Democrat is equally loud in its praise, whilst Mr. Douglas and his Northern disciples endeavor to maintain with partial success an entire indifference upon the subject. A logical result of these respective opinions is that the Republican and Southern Democrat although utterly at variance otherwise, can agree in affirming the irreconcilable difference between freedom and slavery, whilst Mr. Douglas and his followers must denounce such a view as extravagant and absurd.

Accordingly we find Mr. DOUGLAS opening the campaign of 1858 with the following declaration in his Chicago speech, in reference to the speech of ABRAHAM LINCOLN before the Republican State Convention of Illinois in that year:

"He lays down two distinct propositions which I shall notice and upon which I shall take a direct issue with him. His first and main proposition I will give in his own language, Scripture quotations and all. I give his exact language: 'A house divided against itself cannot stand, I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it to cease to be divided; It will become all one thing or all the other.' * * * Now my friends, I must say to you, frankly, that I take bold, unqualified issue with him upon that principle."

In his speech in the Senate, of January 23rd of the present year, on the invasion of States or the suppression of Republicanism, Mr. DOUGLAS is equally firm and decidedly more vituperative:

"Sir, give us a law such as the Constitution contemplates and authorizes, and I will show the Senator from New York that there is a constitutional mode of repressing the 'irrepressible conflict.' I will open the prison door, to allow conspirators against the peace of the Republic and the domestic tranquility of our States to select their cells wherein to drag out a miserable life, as a punishment for their crimes against the peace of society."

The Little Giant proposes to become a Giant Despair and to found a Castle Doubting for the entertainment of Republican pilgrims.

Mr. DOUGLAS's disciples have been emulous in imitating their master. The Illinois legislature in 1859 passed the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the proposition that this Union cannot exist permanently one half free, and one half slave, is absurd and ridiculous, and that no party advocating such a proposition should be permitted to hold the reins of Government—the same being dangerous to the perpetuity of our glorious Union, and at war with the spirit of the Constitution of the United States, and the intention of the framers thereof."

Other instances might be cited but the above quotation is a fair sample of the abuse and insolence of Mr. DOUGLAS and his crew as well as of their irrepressible wrath against the irrepressible conflict.

In this fierce denial of the antagonism of freedom and slavery they show very little knowledge of ethics or history. Nothing is more easily proven either by reason or facts.

I. First as to the Moral Argument.

1. It will hardly be denied by any one that in this world there is an eternal warfare between right and wrong. For reasons which we may not altogether discern good and evil are permitted to exist upon earth and to contend for mastery among men. The cause may be obscure but the fact is certain.

2. It is not less evident and abstractly considered will not be denied by the Douglas Democracy that *freedom is right*. It is a natural God-given right of every human being as is shown by our own instinctive love of it, by the opinions of the wise and good in all ages and by the superior development and progress of nations unfettered by the relation of dominant and servile races.

3. It is equally certain that *slavery is wrong*. It is at war with our natural instincts, with the precepts of Religion and the teachings of History. "The terms slavery and right contradict and exclude each other." None at the North, except a few CHARLES O'CONNORS who for more consistent logic start from false premises will deny this.

4. A necessary conclusion from these three preceding propositions is that freedom and slavery are the respective allies of right and wrong, and engaged in the same truceless warfare against each other. That the conflict between the two is as irrepressible as that between good and evil.

It may seem strange that some men should deny propositions so evident in their mere statement to any fair mind. Ambition and prejudice,

however, often render the human mind strangely obtuse and a demagogue striving to mount to place by appealing to our baser passions can scarce be expected to regard truth and right. Vaulting ambition doth o'er leap itself.

By a similar course of reasoning the Southern Democrat who assumes that slavery is right and that freedom is wrong arrives at the same conclusion of an irrepressible conflict between systems differing in their nature and brought into contact with one another.

II. The argument from opinion is equally positive. Our ablest men of all parties and sections have expressed opinions directly asserting or fairly implying the doctrine that slavery is incompatible with Republicanism.

1. GEORGE WASHINGTON a name which our Douglas friends will hardly care to malign said in a letter to Sir JOHN SINCLAIR:

"There are in Pennsylvania laws for the gradual abolition of slavery, which neither Virginia nor Maryland have at present, but which nothing is more certain than *they must have*, and at a period not remote."

2. THOMAS JEFFERSON a man of whom Democrats were once justly proud is no less positive in his testimony:

"*Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people [negroes] are to be free; nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government.*"

Again, in a letter to EDWARD COLES, our former Governor of Illinois, he says:

"Yet the hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. *It will come*: and whether brought on by the generous energies of our own minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, excited and conducted by the power of our present enemy, if once stationed permanently within our country, and offering asylum and arms to the *oppressed*, is a leaf of our history not yet turned over."

3. JAMES MADISON would not have said, as he did, that, "*where slavery exists, the Republican theory becomes still more fallacious*," had he not recognized the fact that slavery divides the national house against itself.

4. LUTHER MARTIN the great Maryland lawyer declared:

"*Slavery is inconsistent with the genius of Republicanism, and has a tendency to destroy those principles on which it is supported, as it lessens the sense of the equal rights of mankind and habituates us to tyranny and oppression.*"

5. WM. PINKNEY said:

"Nothing is more clear than that the effect of slavery is to destroy that reverence for liberty, which is the vital principle of a Republic." "If slavery continues fifty years longer, its effects will be seen in the decay of the spirit of Liberty in the free States."

6. REID of Georgia said in Congress, in 1820:

"I am not the panegyrist of slavery. It is an unnatural state, a dark cloud which obscures half the lustre of our free institutions."

7. HENRY CLAY, in his famous address in 1827, says:

"If they would repress all tendencies toward liberty and ultimate emancipation, they must do more than put down the benevolent efforts of this Society. They must go back to the era of our liberty and independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. They must revive the slave trade with all its train of atrocities. They must suppress the workings of British philanthropy, seeking to meliorate the condition of the unfortunate West Indian slaves. They must arrest the career of South American deliverance from thralldom. They must blow out the moral lights around us, and extinguish that greatest torch of all which America points to a benighted world, pointing the way to their rights, their liberty and their happiness. And when they have achieved all these purposes their work will be yet incomplete. They must penetrate the human soul and eradicate the light of reason and the love of liberty. Then, and not till then,

when universal darkness and despair prevail, can you perpetuate slavery, and repress all sympathies, and all humane and benevolent efforts among freemen, in behalf of the unhappy portion of our race doomed to bondage."

8. CHARLES JAMES FAULKNER of Virginia in speaking of the economical effects of slavery in 1832, said:

"As well might you attempt to chain the ocean, or stay the avenging bolts of Heaven, as to drive the people from any inquiry which may result in their better condition."

9. GOVERNOR McDOWELL of the same State, and in the same year, expressed himself as follows:

"Sir, you may place the slave where you please—you may dry up, to your uttermost, the fountains of his feelings, the springs of his thought—you may close upon his mind every avenue of knowledge, and cloud it over with artificial night—you may yoke him to your labors, as the ox, which liveth only to work and worketh only to live—you may put him under any process which, without destroying his value as a slave, will debase and crush him as a rational being—you may do all this, and the idea that he was born to be free will survive it all. It is allied to his hope of immortality—it is the ethereal part of his nature which oppression cannot rend. It is a torch lit up in his soul by the hand of Deity, and never meant to be extinguished by the hand of man."

10. DANIEL WEBSTER in a speech at New York in 1837, in speaking of the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, said:

"He is a rash man, indeed, and little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be trifled with or despised. It will assuredly cause itself to be respected. It may be reasoned with, it may be made willing, I believe it is entirely willing, to fulfil all existing engagements and all existing duties, to uphold and defend the Constitution as it is established, with whatever regrets about some provisions which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence, to endeavor to restrain its free expression, to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is,—should this be attempted, I know nothing even in the Constitution or in the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow."

11. JAS. G. BIRNEY of Kentucky said:

"No government which admits injustice as an element can be harmonious or a permanent one."

12. *The Louisville Courier* according to CASSIUS M. CLAY in his Frankfort speech used the following language more than ten years ago:

"I presume that it will not be denied that free labor and slave labor are incompatible. The white man is unwilling to labor by the side of the slave, and the slave is equally averse to laboring by the side of the white man. There exists a mutual repugnancy, and it follows, of course, that *the mass of the labor of Kentucky must be wholly the labor of the white man, or wholly the labor of the slave.*"

13. MR. DOUGLAS himself in 1850 made a statement involving the same doctrine:

"I have already had occasion to remark that at the time of the adoption of the Constitution there were twelve slave States, and six of them have since abolished slavery. *This fact shows that the cause of freedom has steadily and firmly advanced while slavery has receded in the same ratio. We all look forward with confidence to the time when Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, and probably North Carolina and Tennessee, will adopt one gradual system of emancipation, under the operation of which those States must, in process of time, become free.*

* * * Then, sir, the position of the Senator from South Carolina is entirely impracticable. *It would revolutionize the fundamental principles of the government. It would destroy the great principles of popular equality (not popular sovereignty) which must necessarily form the basis of all institutions. It would be a retrograde movement in an age of progress that would astonish the world, (to so amend the Constitution as to preserve an equilibrium between the slave and the free States).—[App. Con. Globe, 1850, vol. 22, part 1, p. 371.*

14. His colleague Mr. SHIELDS was yet more emphatic:

"I tell you, sir, what I think is inevitable—the free States will outnumber the slave States, and the power of the free States will preponderate over the power of the slave States. The South will lose its relative power in this nation. It is doing so every day; not by the action of Government but by the action of *irresistible laws*—laws that control the moral, social and political condition of man"—Speech in Senate, April 5, 1850.

15. THEODORE PARKER in a speech at Boston in 1854, said:

"These two ideas (of freedom and slavery) are now fairly on foot. They are hostile; they are both mutually invasive and destructive. * * * So long as these two ideas exist in the

nation as two political forces, there is no national unity of idea, of course no unity of action. For there is no centre of gravity common to freedom and slavery. They will not compose an equilibrium figure. You may cry 'Peace! Peace!' but so long as these two antagonistic ideas remain, each seeking to organize itself and get exclusive power, there is no peace: there can be none."

16. GEO. FITZHUGH, of Virginia, in his "Sociology for the South, or Free Society a failure," a book published in 1854, is positive regarding the antagonism:

"We deem this peculiar question of negro slavery of very little importance. The issue is made throughout the world on the general subject of slavery in the abstract. The argument has commenced. One set of ideas will govern and control after awhile the civilized world. *Slavery will everywhere be abolished, or everywhere re-instated.*"

17. JEHU BAKER, in a speech delivered at Belleville, in October of 1854, said:

"The spirit of Democracy is the very opposite of the spirit of slavery. They cannot be mixed. They cannot be blended into one principle without unsettling the very foundation on which the moral frame of nature is constructed."

18. The *Richmond Enquirer*, in 1856, contained the following delectable passage:

"Two conflicting forms of Society, cannot, among civilized men, co-exist and endure. The one must give way and cease to exist. The other become universal.

If free society be unnatural, immoral and unchristian, it must fall and give way to a slave society—a social system 'old as the world, universal as man.'"

19. The *Valparaiso* (Texas) *Observer* of the same year contains the following:

"If slavery is not extended, it will shortly have to be abolished, as it was in the Eastern and Middle States. It is evident to the South that either slavery or freedom must ultimately prevail and rule over the whole Union, and they are determined to have that ascendancy."

20. WADE of Ohio, in 1856, in a speech made in Congress showed the conflict between freedom of speech and our Southern "institutions:"

"Inherent and fundamental right of freedom of speech and the press does not and cannot exist in slaveholding communities. This is a necessity of despotism, it is in itself the essence of despotism. There is not a more morbidly suspicious, cruel, revengeful or lawless despotism on the face of the earth, than the nightmare of slavery, which has settled down upon the people of the slaveholding States, with the exception, perhaps of two or three of these States. There is more freedom of speech and of the press to-day, and more personal safety in the exercise of such freedom, at Vienna, St. Petersburg, Paris or Rome, in an attack and exposure of the despotism which reigns supreme over those cities, than there is at Richmond, Charleston, Milledgeville or Mobile, to attack and expose the slaveholding despotisms which rule over those cities with a rod of iron. There are probably more citizens, born and nurtured in the slave States, now in exile from their native States for the exercise of freedom of speech and the press, against the despotism of slaveholding, than there are from Austria, Russia, France, or the two Sicilies for the exercise of the same rights against the despotisms which crush those nations."

21. The preceding views were all expressed years ago, and no one to our knowledge has ever attempted to deny their correctness. But in that masterly piece of condensed logic, the speech of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, in the Republican Convention of Illinois, June 16, 1858, the Speaker re-affirming the same idea brought down upon him "the little dogs and all" of the Douglas Democracy:

"I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I don't expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction: or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new—North as well as South."

22. Four months afterwards, Mr. SEWARD, of New York, in his famous Rochester speech, considering with philosophic mind the present aspect of American affairs, pronounced mildly, yet without apology, his own opinion of the matter:

"Hitherto, the two systems, (of free and slave labor) have existed in different States, but side by side within the American Union. This has happened because the Union is a confederation of States. But in another aspect the United States constitute only one nation. Increase of population, which is filling the States out to their very borders, together with a new and extended network of railroads and other avenues, and an internal commerce which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the States into a higher and more perfect social unity or consolidation. Thus, these antagonistic systems, are continually coming into closer contact, and collision results.

Shall I tell you what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether.

It is an *irrepressible conflict* between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation. Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become markets for legitimate merchandise alone, or else the rye-fields and wheat-fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be surrendered by their farmers to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men.

It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromise between the slave and free States, and it is the existence of this great fact that renders all such pretended compromises, when made, vain and ephemeral. Startling as this saying may appear to you, fellow citizens, it is by no means an original or even a modern one. Our forefathers knew it to be true, and unanimously acted upon it when they framed the Constitution of the United States. They regarded the existence of the servile system in so many of the States with sorrow and shame, which they openly confessed, and they looked upon the collision between them, which was then just revealing itself, and which we are now accustomed to deplore, with favor and hope. They knew that either the one or the other system must exclusively prevail. **

It remains to say on this point only one word, to guard against misapprehension. If these States are to again become universally slaveholding, I do not pretend to say with what violations of the Constitution that end shall be accomplished. On the other hand, while I do confidently believe and hope that my country will yet become a land of universal freedom, I do not expect that it will be made so otherwise than through the action of the several States co-operating with the Federal Government, and all acting in strict conformity with their respective Constitutions."

23. JOHN HICKMAN, of Pennsylvania, although at that time friendly to Mr. DOUGLAS, said in a speech made during the last year:

"There is an eternal antagonism between freedom and slavery, and one or the other must succumb to the ascendancy of the other."

24. EDWARD EVERETT, in speaking of DANIEL WEBSTER, in September, 1859, gave his own and Mr. WEBSTER's opinion upon the same matter:

"He not only confidently anticipated, what the lapse of seven years since his decease has witnessed and is witnessing, that the newly acquired and the newly organized territories of the Union would grow up into free States, but in common with all, or nearly all, the statesmen of the last generation, he believed that free labor would ultimately prevail throughout the country. He thought he saw that, in the operation of the same causes which have produced this result in the Middle and Eastern States, it was visibly taking place in the States north of the cotton growing region; and he inclined to the opinion that there also, under the influence of physical and economical causes, free labor would ultimately be found most productive, and would therefore be ultimately established."

25. JAMES FREEMAN CLARK, of Boston, in a sermon, on the Harper's Ferry affair delivered in November of 1859 stated the doctrine with precision:

"There is an irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery. The opposition is radical and entire, *there can be no peace or permanent truce between them till one has conquered the other*. Either slavery is right or it is wrong. The radical question is this; can one man belong to another as his property or not? To this question there can be but two answers—*yes or no*. There is no intermediate answer."

26. CASSIUS M. CLAY, in his Frankfort speech of Jan. 10th, 1860, said in speaking of the doctrine of the irrepressible conflict:

"I understand that to be the openly avowed sentiment of WASHINGTON, MADISON and JEFFERSON. I understand that to be the declaration of the resolution in Virginia for which your candidate for speaker of the Democratic party, Mr. BOGOT, voted some years ago. I understand furthermore that that was the declaration of the late South Carolina Legislature."

27. WENDELL PHILLIPS, in a speech delivered at Boston, May 30th, 1860, said :

"Slavery and freedom are so, not only antagonistic, but inconsistent, that the one cannot exist in the fully developed presence of the other."

28. CARL SCHURZ, the martyr of freedom in the old world, and its apostle in the new, in his speech of August 1, 1860, at St. Louis, said :

"Slavery demands for its protection and perpetuation a system of policy which is utterly incompatible with the principles upon which the organization of free labor society rests."

Through all this various testimony of our fathers of the Revolution and of our Statesmen of to-day—of Southerner and Northerner—Abolitionist and Slave Trader—Conservative and Radical—we may trace this one idea of the radical difference and opposing nature of freedom and slavery.

Of the twenty-eight authorities quoted three have been Presidents of the United States. Three others occupied the first rank among the Statesmen of the last generation, and fifteen are of Southern or slave soil origin.

Yet for holding similar views, the Republican party and its leaders are reviled and insulted by DOUGLAS and his Democracy. From such an abuse we claim no exemption. We have no apologies to make for holding opinions identical with those of WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON and MADISON. In such company we prefer his abuse to his praise.

But as for Mr. DOUGLAS he would do well not to pass rashly by the opinions of the wisest and best men who founded the government which it devolves upon us to perpetuate.

Still less may he safely slight those great axioms of Morality and Religion, which lie at the foundation of this doctrine. "No man may put off the law of God."

In the one case he shows himself to be an unthinking innovator; in the other, a practical atheist, setting aside all distinctions between right and wrong, and denying that there is a Ruler who has assigned to every act its eternal value.

Such impartiality in view of good and evil is license rather than liberty, and more mischievous than manifest ill. Like tyranny as personified in BRYANT'S "Antiquity of Freedom," the "illustrious Senator," might be said to "weave his snares."

"He shall send

*Quaint maskers, wearing fair and gallant forms
To catch thy gaze, and uttering graceful words,
To charm thy ear ; while his sly imps, by stealth,
Twine round thee threads of steel, light thread on thread
That grow to fetters ; or bind down thy arms
With chains concealed in chaplets. Oh ! not yet
Mayest thou unbrace thy corslet, nor lay by
Thy sword ; nor yet, O Freedom ! close thy lids
In slumber ; for thine enemy never sleeps,
And thou must watch and combat till the day
Of the new earth and heaven."*